

AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

TITLE: Indoor Environments: Reducing Public Exposure to Indoor Pollutants

ACTION: Request for Proposals (RFP)

RFP No: EPA -OAR-ORIA-09-09

CFDA: 66.034

SUMMARY: Formal Agency responses to questions regarding the subject RFP

Date: September 10, 2009

Q1: In the announcement on the grants.gov web site, it lists the CFDA number and then this descriptor:

CFDA Number(s): 66.034 -- Surveys, Studies, Investigations, Demonstrations and Special Purpose Activities Relating to the Clean Air Act

Can we include surveys as part of our activities under this RFP? In the past surveys were prohibited.

A1: Yes, your organization may propose surveys as part of the activities it will carry out if EPA awards your organization a cooperative agreement under this RFP. Surveys are authorized by the statutory authority for the cooperative agreement, the program description in the Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance and are not prohibited by the terms of the RFP. However, using EPA funds to develop and administer a survey may lead to substantial delays in the performance of your cooperative agreement and impose substantial administrative burdens on EPA and your organization. OMB regulations implementing the Paperwork Reduction Act require EPA to obtain "information collection request" (ICR) authorization if a recipient of a cooperative agreement uses EPA funds to develop and administer a survey which asks identical questions to ten or more persons. The ICR approval process is complex and requires a significant amount of time to complete. Please review OMB regulations at 5 CFR Part 1320 for details <http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&rgn=div5&view=text&node=5:3.0.2.3.9&idno=5> .

Successful applicants can design and administer surveys with their own funds, and use EPA cooperative agreement funds to analyze and distribute the results of the survey without triggering the need for EPA to obtain an ICR. In addition, OMB regulations at 5 CFR 1320.3(h)(4) provide that EPA does not need to obtain an ICR for cooperative agreement recipients to use EPA funds to design and administer pre and post training tests for program participants.

Q2. Our organization is considering proposing a project that will involve..... Please provide advice as to whether this project is acceptable under this RFP EPA -OAR-ORIA-09-09.

A2. Unfortunately, EPA cannot provide pre-proposal comment or advice on applicant project proposals. As stated in the RFP EPA-OAR-ORIA-09-09 under section:

IV. PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

H. Pre-Proposal Assistance and Communications

In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposal packages, provide informal comments on draft narrative proposals, or provide advice and/or guidance to applicants on how to respond to ranking criterion. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals. However, EPA will respond to questions in writing from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criterion, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement.

Q3. Are letters of support or endorsement considered part of the 13 page limit?

A3. Yes. An applicant's **ENTIRE** narrative proposal package that they submit must be 13 pages or less, as stated in "C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria number 7" and "C. Content of Proposal Submission".

Q4. What type of asthma care education activities are covered under this RFP?

A4. With respect to asthma, only those activities that directly address environmental factors that may influence asthma onset or exacerbation are eligible for funding under this RFP (although ancillary activities related to medical management are acceptable). Applicants are encouraged to integrate environmental trigger avoidance into comprehensive asthma management initiatives, as recommended by the National Asthma Education Prevention Program, or NAEPP, found at <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/naepp/>. Where substantial non-environmental management (e.g., medical management) activities are described in concept proposals submitted under this RFP, applicants should be prepared to document alternative funding sources for any substantial non-environmental components that are part of comprehensive asthma management initiatives.

Q5: Is EPA seeking projects at the local level?

A5: EPA's Indoor Environments Program makes progress towards its goal by funding demonstration, training, outreach and/or education **projects that achieve national scale impacts** by supporting or leveraging networks with proven delivery channels. The RFP "Scope of Work" on page 3 states...

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible entities (as described in Section III.A) to conduct demonstration, training, education, and/or outreach projects that seek to reduce exposure to indoor air contaminants. All proposals:

- Must yield results that can be tracked, evaluated and reported on.
- Must clearly articulate a plan to produce results that have national-scale implications or benefits (in other words, this RFP is not designed to fund small-scale local projects).
- Must align with EPA strategic goals, objectives, outputs and outcomes as

described in Section IC, below.

Q6. The RFP does not appear to restrict activities that include smoking cessation. Is this assessment correct?

A6. Activities primarily intended to discourage non-smokers (e.g., teens) from starting to smoke, or which are intended to encourage or assist smokers in quitting (cessation), fall outside of EPA's authorities to conduct research and disseminate information on indoor air pollutants and are therefore ineligible for funding through this Request for Proposals. However, activities related to secondhand smoke are eligible for consideration within the context of the asthma priority area and as a component of an integrated approach, as these activities are described in Section I.B. Scope of Work.

Q7. Can you please tell me if in addition to the 13 page narrative, can we attach letters of support or other appendices?

A7. Letters of support or other appendices may be submitted, but will be included in the 13 page limit. An applicant's **ENTIRE narrative proposal submission must be 13 pages or less**, as stated in "C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria number 7" and "C. Content of Proposal Submission". If the **ENTIRE narrative proposal submission** is more than 13 pages **it will not be considered for evaluation.**

Q8. Do all outcome measures have to be quantitative, or can some also be qualitative? Also, please indicate whether your response applies to short-term and intermediate action outcomes, to long-term environmental health outcomes, or both.

A8. As described on pages 8-9 (C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs, 3. Outcomes), activities must yield measurable environmental outcomes that demonstrate progress towards project goals, objectives and long-term environmental health benefits. These outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health related or programmatic but must be quantitative. Applicants must estimate the intermediate **action** outcomes they will achieve and describe how they will quantify them.

EPA recognizes that intermediate and long-term environmental **health** outcomes can not always be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period and applicants may not always be able to quantify the link between intermediate and long-term outcomes. In this case, applicants should be able to qualitatively describe this link.

Please refer to pages 14-15 which describe the Work Plan content, referencing both quantitative and qualitative outcomes.

Q9. When preparing our proposals, are Applicants allowed to use both the front and back of each page?

A9. No, we will not accept double sided pages for this RFP. The 13 page limit is for one sided pages only, not for front and back of a page. EPA will strictly adhere to the page limitation stated in the RFP, as outlined below, and **will not review any narrative proposal that exceeds 13 (one sided) pages of text.**

7. Applicants' narrative proposals MUST NOT exceed 13 single-spaced pages and must be written in the English language and submitted on letter sized paper (8.5 inch by 11 inch) only. The minimum acceptable font size for the narrative proposal and the budget is 12 point; material in smaller font sizes will not be considered. Pages must have at least 1 inch margins on all sides.

(page 13) Section IV. Part C. Content of Proposal Submission

Narrative Proposal — MUST NOT EXCEED 13 pages (using 8.5 inch x 11 INCH paper)

The document should be readable format or in PDF for Windows and consolidated into a single file and be prepared as stated below.

The Narrative Proposal cannot exceed a maximum of 13 single-spaced typewritten letter sized pages, using no less than a font of size 12 and 1 inch margins on all sides. The Narrative proposal is comprised of three sections: the summary information, the work plan and the budget. Any narrative proposals submitted in excess of 13 pages will not be evaluated nor considered for funding.

Q10. In Section IV. Part C "Content of Proposal Submission" of the RFP, it does not mention the SF 424B (Assurances), the Lobbying certificate, or the Key Contact Form, which are all listed on the EPA website. Do these additional application forms need to be included in my proposal package?

A10. No, only the listed items as identified in Section IV. Part C "Content of Proposal Submission" are required at this time. Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance and (SF) 424A, Budget Information and the Narrative Proposal are required for proposal submission. **In addition, Standard Form 424 and Standard Form 424A do not count in the 13 page single sided limit for the Narrative Proposal.** Please refer to the sections noted below in the RFP on pages 13 and 14.

Section IV. Part C. Content of Proposal Submission (page 13)

The proposal package **must** include all of the following materials:

Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance

Complete the form, available at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/forms/forms.htm>. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and e-mail address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424.

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet, or D&B, Data Universal Number System, or DUNS, number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or at <http://www.dnb.com>.

Standard Form (SF) 424A, Budget Information

Complete the form, available at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/forms/forms.htm>. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of SF-424A; the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the

base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits) and the amount also should also indicated on line 22.

Narrative Proposal — MUST NOT EXCEED 13 pages (using 8.5 inch x 11 INCH paper)

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The Narrative Proposal cannot exceed a maximum of 13 single-spaced typewritten letter sized pages, using no less than a font of size 12 and 1 inch margins on all sides. The Narrative proposal is comprised of three sections: the summary information, the work plan and the budget. Any narrative proposals submitted in excess of 13 pages will not be evaluated nor considered for funding.

Q11. Some of the application forms will not allow you to type directly on them. I plan to submit the application electronically, so I am not sure how to accomplish this. In addition, several forms allowed me to type directly on the document, but stated that I could not save a copy. Overall, all I am wondering if the expectation is to fill out the forms and put them in a PDF once the information is completed on the forms and then submit them electronically?

A11. Please follow the instructions stated under 'Electronic Submission' on page 13 of the RFP (see below). In addition, please refer to Q/A # 10 above for the required content of proposal submission.

Electronic Submission

Your organization's Authorized Representative, or AOR, **must** electronically submit your complete proposal package to EPA, as described below, to

NationalIndoorEnvironmentRFP2009@epa.gov no later than **4 p.m. EDT on**

September 14, 2009 and include the "Announcement title or #" Indoor Environments: Reducing Public Exposure to Indoor Pollutants or EPA -OAR-ORIA-09-09 – [name of applicant] in the subject line. The electronic submission of your proposal must be made by an official representative —AOR — of your institution, who is authorized to sign proposals for Federal assistance. **All required documents listed in Section IV.C of the announcement must be attached to the e-mail as separate Adobe PDF files.**

Please note that if you choose to submit your materials via e-mail, you are accepting all risks attendant to email submission including server delays. E-mail submissions exceeding 15MB will experience transmission delays which will affect when they are received by the Agency. For these size submissions, applicants should submit their application materials via hard copy because if they are sent via e-mail they may be received late and not considered for funding. Applicants submitting their application materials through e-mail should confirm receipt of the materials with Victoria Drew as soon as possible after submission.

Q12. Are the names of the 2005 recipients available online and what level of detail is given on the funded projects?

A12. Descriptions of our current Recipients and their projects from the last Indoor Environments: Reducing Public Exposure to Indoor Pollutants competition are available at: http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pdfs/partners_directory_2007.pdf.

This website provides some information on our organization and program activities
<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/aboutus.html>.

Q13. Is this grant opportunity offered every four years or is it an annual opportunity?

A13. This opportunity funding is offered every three to four years and is traditionally funded incrementally on an annual basis per year.

FUNDING/AWARDS: The annual estimated funding for this competitive opportunity ranges from approximately \$3 million to \$5 million per year for up to 4 years. The total funding available under this competitive opportunity ranges from approximately \$12 million to \$20 million over a 4-year period. EPA anticipates awarding between 25 to 35 cooperative agreements from this announcement, subject to availability of funds and the quality of proposals received. These cooperative agreements are expected to range between \$25,000 and \$300,000 per year in value. EPA will not consider proposals in excess of \$300,000 per year. EPA anticipates the 2009 Indoor Environments competition to be highly competitive. In the 2005 Indoor Environments competition, 189 proposals were received and only 34 projects were funded.

Q14. On page 15 of the RFP, under **part d. Organization and Staff Experience and Qualifications**

- Description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the proposed project.
- Description of staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

Should applicants be attaching curriculum vitas? Would that count as part of the 13 pages of the narrative proposal?

A14. Only a brief description of staff, knowledge experience is required. Yes, this part will count toward the 13 page limit of the narrative proposal.

If selected, additional information may be requested at a later time.

Q15. Can you provide me with better guidance on the Scope of Work for bullet 2: (Proposals) Must clearly articulate a plan to produce results that have national-scale implications or benefits (in other words, this RFP is not designed to fund small scale local projects).

A15. Projects do not have to cross state lines in order to have national scale implications, benefits, or impacts. The intention of the RFP is to fund activities that will yield the greatest results in reducing exposures to indoor environmental contaminants. It is entirely possible that a state-level or even local project can be designed in such a way that its results can be scaled up and/or replicated to achieve national scale results. The caution against proposing small-scale local projects, no matter how worthy they may be, is simply a reflection of the limited funding available and the need to ensure that those funds are spent as effectively as possible.

Q16 (a). The RFP states that "EPA will not consider proposals under the RFP addressing indoor asbestos, lead, PCBs or other chemical-specific pollutants." Does

EPA consider pesticides (specifically indoor insecticides) to be chemical-specific pollutants?

Q16 (b). Because there is a documented correlation between roaches and allergens which can lead to asthma, as well as a link between pesticide application and asthma, we are proposing a community-wide education program to promote Integrated Pest Management. Does this fall within the parameters of EPA's intent with this RFP?

A 16 (a) and (b). Integrated pest management education would be eligible for funding under this RFP. However, as described in several excerpts from the RFP, below, the intent of this RFP is to fund activities that promote comprehensive asthma care and integrated approaches to reduce indoor exposures to asthma triggers and other indoor pollutants.

As noted in the RFP, EPA anticipates receiving a large number of funding proposals and expects the evaluation process to be highly competitive, so prospective applicants are encouraged to carefully consider the language of the RFP before submitting proposals (see specific sections of the RFP below).

Page 4: "EPA [asthma] program initiatives are aligned with [NAEPP] recommendations and focus on home, school, and community-based interventions, health care provider training, action-driving national events (e.g., the National Asthma Forum, webinars, etc.), and supporting real-time learning by connecting communities via the *Communities in Action for Asthma Friendly Environments* Online Network at <http://www.asthmacommunitynetwork.org>. EPA is seeking proposals that:

- **Build community capacity to deliver effective, comprehensive asthma care by leveraging EPA's *Communities in Action for Asthma Friendly Environments* Online Network and the National Asthma Forum. This could include recruiting programs into the Network, promoting interactive learning through the Online Network tools and providing scholarships to attend the Forum.**
- **Train health care providers to deliver comprehensive asthma care that includes, education on environmental triggers of asthma and mitigation strategies for those triggers.**
- **Integrate environmental controls into standard practices for asthma health care.**
- **Educate children with asthma and their caregivers about asthma and effective environmental control measures.**

Page 5: IAQ can often best be improved in buildings through integration of IAQ best practices that address multiple indoor air contaminants using strategies that are consistent with EPA guidance found at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq>. EPA is seeking demonstration, training, outreach and/or education proposals that:

- **Are designed to address multiple IAQ contaminants and other relevant issues, such as ventilation and moisture control, to promote comprehensive improvement of IAQ in homes, schools and/or offices.**

Page 6: "Applicants are encouraged to integrate environmental trigger avoidance into comprehensive asthma management initiatives, as recommended by the National Asthma Education Prevention Program, or NAEPP, found at <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/naepp/>."

Q17. Does this mean that the project's scope of work must be national? Meaning, the project must have national partners and implement its work plan on a national level. Or can the grantee's work be done on a local or regional level, but provide a model that can be easily replicated on a national scale by other organizations?

A17. The grantee's work may be done on a local or regional level, if it provides a model that can be easily replicated on a national scale by the grantee organization or other organizations. The intention of the RFP is to fund activities that will yield the greatest results in reducing exposures to indoor environmental contaminants. It is entirely possible that a regional, state, or even local project can be designed in such a way that its results can be scaled up and/or replicated to achieve national scale results. The caution against proposing small-scale local projects, no matter how worthy they may be, is simply a reflection of the limited funding available and the need to ensure that those funds are spent as effectively as possible.

Q18. For lines 8-11, we do have in kind contributions. According to the SF424A instructions, we will need to provide a brief explanation on a separate sheet for the in kind contributions.

Will this separate sheet for the "in kind contributions" be excluded from the 13 page "narrative proposal" limit?

A18. The explanation for the in-kind contribution that needs to accompany the 424A is not considered part of the 13 page narrative proposal.

However, as part of the "Summary Information Page" page requirement under "**e. Total Project Costs**", applicants are required to **identify funding from other sources, including cost share or in-kind resources** as part of the 13 page narrative proposal.

Page 14 of the RFP...

1. Summary Information Page (not to exceed 1 page):

- a. Project Title.
- b. Applicant Information. Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, fax and e-mail address.
- c. Type of Eligible Organization as stated in III.A (i.e., Non- profit, State agency, Institution of higher learning, etc.).
- d. Funding Requested. Specify the amount you are requesting from EPA for the entire project period as well as annually/per year.
- e. **Total Project Cost. Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including cost share or in-kind resources.**
- f. Project period. Provide beginning and ending dates. (Projects are anticipated to begin Oct. 1, 2010 and end no later than Sept. 30, 2014.)

****Reminder****

All Questions must be communicated in writing as stated on page 21 of the RFP under "VII. AGENCY CONTACTS":

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

All questions or comments regarding this RFP must be communicated in writing via e-mail to Victoria Drew at

QsonNationalIndoorAirRFP2009@epa.gov. Questions and answers will be posted until the closing date of this announcement at the OAR Grants/Funding Web site at http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html.

Q19. We are a national organization with 20 local affiliate members. We--the national organization--will be applying as the grantee and 11 local affiliates would receive sub-contracts to perform work under the project. It does not make any sense that we would have an open process of competitive bidding for these sub-contracts, since our local affiliates would be the only organizations that could possibly carry out the work of this project. We are not proposing to procure any commercial products or services.

A19. EPA does not consider the funding arrangements you describe between your organization and its non profit affiliates to be procurement "sub- contracts" of commercial goods or services subject to the competitive Procurement Standards of 40 CFR Part 30. Rather, it appears that (name of organization) would be making subawards of financial assistance as that term is defined at 40 CFR 30.2(ff). Your organization would need to enter into written subaward agreements with the affiliates and have procedures in place to ensure that the costs the affiliates incur are eligible and allowable costs under your grant with EPA.

In your proposal, please briefly explain that (name of organization) intends to make subawards to its non profit affiliates on a non competitive basis. Indicate that these transactions do not involve the acquisition of commercial services from the affiliates. Your proposed budget would include the projected costs for the subawards in the "other" category rather than "contractual."